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SPORTS AND GAMES IN ALBERTA BEFORE 1900

by



JOHN E. REID

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
OF MASTER OF ARTS

FACULTY OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

FALL, 1969



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The undersigned certify that they have read, and
recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance,
a thesis entitled SPORTS AND GAMES IN ALBERTA BEFORE 1900
submitted by JOHN E. REID in partial fulfilment of the re-
quirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Sincere appreciation is extended to my thesis chairman, Dr. M. Howell, and my committee members, Miss A. Hall and Dr. L.G. Thomas, for their encouragement, and assistance extended to me in completing this thesis.

To my wife Patricia, who initiated this project and my son Scott, who aided its completion, I dedicate this work.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to trace the development of sports, games and pastimes in the area now known as the province of Alberta, before 1900. The development of these activities was closely linked with the overall development of the province, and in particular, with the establishment of the railways, telegraph, newspapers, and the settlement of various areas by immigrants from Great Britain, Continental Europe and the United States.

Both individual and team sports were played in the settled areas. Baseball, cricket, soccer, rugby, curling, hockey, rifle shooting, horse racing, tennis, golf and skating were among the most popular. Most of these activities were not introduced until after 1880. Following their introduction many of the activities experienced times of great popularity as well as times of general neglect.

The sports were found mainly in areas of greatest population density, generally relied on several individuals for their operation, and were accompanied by wagering in some instances. The two big sports days of the year were May twenty-four and July first, with track and field being the core activity. Although the history of sports in Alberta is not lengthy, it is a rich and varied one.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Between the forty-ninth and the sixtieth degree north latitude and the one hundred and tenth degree longitude and the Rocky Mountains lies the Province of Alberta and its people. Geographically it contains mountains, prairies, forest belts, lakes and rivers, and semi-arid regions. Its population is a heterogeneous group with people from various parts of the world. Herein lies its uniqueness; an area of varying geography where Germans, Americans, Ukrainians, British, French and English Canadians, and others moved to build a new life for themselves. With the development of the country and the Province the people adapted to their new environment while still maintaining some aspects of their cultural heritage.

Each group of immigrants brought with them their own means or ideas of enjoying their leisure time. Some groups maintained their previous habits and enjoyed the games of their ancestors. The English ranchers in the Calgary district formed polo teams in the 1880's and continued to ride to the hunt, except the fox had been replaced by the coyote. In other areas the new immigrants took to games that were foreign to them. By 1900 Conjurung Creek in the Leduc district had become a hockey "hot bed" even though most of the people in the area were from the British Isles and the United States.

As settlement progressed, technological advances gradually changed the way of life. In Edmonton the telegraph came into operation in 1879 and the news from the rest of Canada and the world was no longer weeks old when it reached the people in the Edmonton district. By 1883 Calgary was part of the transcontinental rail service and in 1891 a line connecting Edmonton and Calgary had been completed. With the railway came the settlers

and the area which is now the Province of Alberta grew in population from just over 15,000 in 1881, to 28,783 in 1894, while the Edmonton area had grown to nearly 7,000 people just three years after the arrival of the railway. The increase in population combined with the use of the railway resulted in the growth of several large cities and many small towns. Edmonton became the distributing point from the northern half of the area while Calgary, being on the transcontinental line, was the link between eastern and western Canada.

As a result of these changes people were in closer contact with one another and were able to travel easier and for longer distances. People in some of the urban centers were of a sufficient number that several teams could be formed and leagues set up. Also, with the close proximity of the team members practices became more frequent and the level of competition improved. Soon after the railway was completed Association football, baseball and cricket teams from Edmonton, Calgary and Lethbridge were travelling back and forth in order to compete. Newspaper circulation permitted the various teams to keep in touch with what the other teams were doing and as competition between different areas increased, rule differences gradually disappeared.

Purpose

The purpose of the study is to examine the origin, development and the status of pastimes, games and sports until 1900 in the area now known as the Province of Alberta.

Need

"The course of human history is strongly influenced by the growth of human knowledge".¹ If we are to understand our present world, examination

¹ Karl R. Popper, The Poverty of Historicism, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Limited, 1960, p. ix.

of our past is a vital part of this understanding. Pastimes, games and sports form a vital part of our culture and a complete history of our past must contain this aspect of our lives. Therefore there is a need to increase our knowledge in the sport history area.

On a more limited plane the physical education historian, to be able to write accurate accounts, must collect and record existing records concerning the conception and development of physical activities. Concerning this practical aspect Van Dalen comments:

Historians cannot fabricate stories about the past, nor can they construct narratives on mere hear-say. They must critically examine primary source materials -- documents, relics and accounts of competent eye-witnesses -- to obtain authentic and credible information. These source materials are of paramount importance without them there can be no history.²

Limitations

There are two limitations concerning this study. First there is the problem which faces every historian. Direct observations cannot be made, instead the historian must rely on the careful evaluation of documents, and other written material along with interviews with people about the past. All this information is biased to the extent that the people who recorded the past did so under the influence of their own society. Pastimes and games in the era of the early newspapers were not considered important and newsworthy and consequently little is recorded about them until the newspapers started to expand and games and sports became more prominent.

The second limitation relates to primary source material. Generally there is adequate information available, however, it is scattered over a wide area and there are several gaps. There are almost complete records of some

² D.B. Van Dalen, "Rescue our Records". Journal of Health, Physical Education and Recreation. Vol. 30, November 1959, p. 39.

activities, such as horse racing in Southern Alberta, yet in other areas little or nothing exists. The newspapers are generally the best primary sources but in times of elections, especially in the earlier years of existence and when the editor was running for office, little except politics and paid advertisements were reported. In the period before newspapers, records of what people did in their leisure time are very scarce and in some cases the conception of some pastimes and games are lost forever.

Delimitations

1. The geographical area under study will be confined to the area presently known as the Province of Alberta.
2. The time-period will cover a span of time starting with the arrival of the fur traders and end with the start of the twentieth century.
3. The peoples studied will be mainly those of European ancestry, however the native Indians will be mentioned when they take part in activities sponsored by the Europeans.
4. Dance and fishing and hunting will not be covered in this study. Dance is a separate study in itself, thus the reason for its exclusion. Fishing and hunting will not be covered for the following reason. These two activities are known in every western civilization studied by man and the nature of the activities, with their economic involvement, makes it hard to determine from existing records whether they were engaged in for economic or recreational purposes.

Definitions

Pastime is a physical activity performed for enjoyment during one's free time where physical movement and/or skill are the principle components of the activity. There is an absence of competition and the activity takes place outside fixed boundaries of time and space.

Game is any physical activity governed by temporary or permanent rules, which takes place in situations of fixed boundaries of time and/or space, and exhibits characteristics of competition by which winners or losers may be determined.

Sport is any game that is played in more than one locality, with the basic rules being common to all individuals or teams and the element of advancement towards some form of championship being present.

CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL SETTING

The same fur trade that had brought the French and English into the forests around Hudson's Bay was responsible for the first white men journeying into present day Alberta. The "coureurs de bois" were in search of more furs and each year they travelled farther up river, until in the early 1750's, they were trading with the Indians on the upper tributaries of the Bow, Belly and Red Deer Rivers¹. Anthony Henday wintered between present day Edmonton and Calgary during 1754 while employed by the Hudson's Bay Company and is the first European to have been in Alberta, according to the evidence that is available². By 1788 the permanent settlement, Fort Chipwyman, had been constructed on Lake Athabasca by A. McKenzie for the North West Company.

The year 1800 saw the existence of several trading posts as a result of the competition between the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company. Both companies were anxious to cut into the trade of the other and consequently each company established a rival post close to his competitor's establishment. One of the results was an increase in population, but this was soon reversed when the two companies united under the Hudson's Bay Company in 1821. With the Hudson's Bay Company's policy of not over-trapping an area the number of posts were reduced and Fort Edmonton became the distribution point for the Upper Saskatchewan district.

Wheat had been grown successfully in Edmonton by 1846, and some of the pioneer missionaries were working with the Indians. Reverend Rundle of the Methodist church was in Edmonton by 1840 and two years later a Catholic priest,

¹ A.O. MacRae, History of Alberta, Western Canada History Co., 1912, p.2.

² Helen M. Eckert, "The Development of Organized Recreation and Physical Education in Alberta", unpublished Master's thesis, University of Alberta, 1953, p.12.

Father Thibault, was holding services in the fort.³ As the white population was small, most of the missionaries devoted a good deal of their time and energy in bringing Christianity to the Indians. This may, in fact, have aided settlement in the years to come as the Indians, through the work of the missionaries, were somewhat prepared for the settlement process.

Before settlement could take place two main problems had to be solved. The west, and its economic possibilities, had to be made known to the rest of the world, and once an interest had been created a means of satisfactory transportation had to be established. The Canadian Colonial government realized the problem of transportation and in preparation for its takeover of Rupert's Land, they sent Henry Hind west to explore the prairie region and report on possible transportation routes.

On July 15, 1870, Rupert's Land officially became the North West Territories and, in 1875, the first elected legislative assembly of the Territories met in Battleford.

The west received law and order on a permanent basis in 1873 when the North West Mounted Police marched out from Fort Garry. By 1876 police posts were established in Fort Macleod, Calgary, and Fort Saskatchewan.⁴ The establishment of the force in several areas throughout the district succeeded in accomplishing two things. The whisky smuggling from across the border was virtually eliminated, and as a result alcohol was not readily available to the Indian population. Perhaps more important was the establishment of a law code that was enforced both for whites and Indians alike. As a result

³ MacRae op. cit. p. 158.

⁴ W.G. Hardy, The Alberta Golden Jubilee Anthology, McClland and Stewart Limited, 1955, p. 68.

no large forces of soldiers were needed to protect the new settlers. Stories of the police success soon filtered back east and into the United States; the publicity was growing.

The number of Europeans that had settled in the west prior to 1880 was very small. The population of Edmonton in 1858 was only one hundred and fifty, and eighty of those were children.⁵ Some immigrants from the United States started to move into the Fort Macleod-Calgary district soon after the police had arrived. Reverend John McDougall and his brother David brought in the first head of stock, composed of cattle and horses, in 1874 from Montana, and I.G. Baker of Fort Benton, Montana, opened trading posts at Fort Macleod and Calgary.⁶ Transportation at this time was by Red River cart, York boat, or bull and mule teams. The Red River carts carried nine hundred to twelve hundred pounds and could average about twenty miles a day. The first cart train arrived in Edmonton in 1858, and by 1867 the Hudson's Bay Company train to Edmonton from Winnipeg was composed of fifty carts.⁷ The York boats were made in Rocky Mountain House and Edmonton, and were in use on the North Saskatchewan as early as 1825. The boats, twenty eight feet in length, proved to be faster than the carts but the use of the York boats was confined mainly to the Hudson's Bay Company. In the southern part of the province the open prairie and the nearness of settlement in Montana saw the six and twelve mule

⁵ MacRae, op. cit. p. 136.

⁶ Hardy, op. cit. p. 57.

⁷ John Blue, Alberta Past and Present, Chicago: Pioneer Historical Publishing Company, 1924, p. 303.

or oxen teams hauling supplies and settlers into the areas around the new settlements of Calgary and Fort Macleod.

By 1880 transportation and communications had made steady advances. The Hudson's Bay Company had steamboats operating on the North Saskatchewan between Edmonton and Winnipeg with the first steamboat, the S.S. Northcote, arriving in Edmonton in the spring of 1875.⁸ Communication with the outside world was greatly improved when the telegraph line was completed to Edmonton in 1879. The line ran from Winnipeg through Battleford to Edmonton and news was no longer weeks old when it reached the inhabitants of the Edmonton district. The effect of these changes on the Edmonton community alone resulted in the Edmonton Bulletin releasing its first edition in December of 1880, while the first agricultural fair, held in the Hudson's Bay fort, had come to a successful conclusion. The biggest change in the transportation field was the arrival of the Canadian Pacific Railway line in Calgary in the summer of 1883. The west now had a direct link with the east and settlement began in earnest. The railway line through the province created a minor population boom with Pincher Creek, High River, Fort Macleod, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat and Calgary all growing into permanent town sites. Soon after the railway reached Calgary, the town became a distribution center with stage coach lines transporting mail, people and supplies to Fort Macleod, Pincher Creek and Edmonton. The railway, in fact, helped bring an end to the steamboat service on the North Saskatchewan as it was now cheaper to ship freight by rail to Calgary than by road to Edmonton.⁹

⁸ Hardy, *op. cit.* p. 75.

⁹ Blue, *op. cit.* p. 309.

The Riel Rebellion in 1885, even though no actual fighting occurred in the Alberta area, had certain benefits for the future province. The Canadian Pacific Railway, under Van Horn, was given the task of moving troops west and as a result the line through northern Ontario was quickly completed. Movement by an all-Canadian route from east to west was now a reality. A good majority of the three thousand troops from eastern Canada moved through Calgary and some then travelled north to Edmonton before moving east to the battle field in Saskatchewan. Returning east the troops spoke in glowing terms of the vast regions of undeveloped land, for many had caught the pioneer spirit.

Alberta was now open to settlement and in the next fifteen years the population increased, more railways were built, telephones and electric light were installed, and sports and games became an increasingly important part of the daily life of the people. Since 1883 the miles of railway track had continued to increase, and by 1892 there were lines connecting Lethbridge and Dunmore, Calgary and Edmonton, Calgary and Fort Macleod and Lethbridge to Great Falls, Montana.¹⁰ Then, in 1897, the Canadian Pacific Railway, having previously taken over the Lethbridge-Dunmore line, extended the line west through the Crowsnest Pass.

With improved transportation the population continued to increase. The first areas settled followed the railway lines, and towns such as Lacombe, Leduc and Wetaskiwin grew with the railway. The older settlements showed continuous growth, with Edmonton growing from a population of 2,599 in 1885 to 6,875 in 1892, just one year after the arrival of the railway.¹¹ The

¹⁰ John J. Martin, The Prairie Hub, Strathmore: The Strathmore Standard, 1967, p. 112.

¹¹ Edmonton Bulletin, April 8, 1892.

settlers came from eastern Canada, the plains of Europe, the towns of Great Britain and the dirt farms of Minnesota and the Dakotas.¹²

Along with improved transportation came improved communication. Telegraph lines connected the main centers with each other and with eastern Canada. Newspapers were being published in Edmonton, Calgary, Macleod, Medicine Hat and Lethbridge and with the telegraph reports the inhabitants of Alberta could read in detail what was going on in the local district, the west, eastern Canada and the world at large.

With settlement came changes in the living patterns of the settlers. The buffalo had gone, the Indians were on reservations, and the fur trade, except in the northern part of the province, had gradually given way to agriculture and industry. People with various occupations moved into the new towns to set up businesses. Doctors, lawyers, toolsmiths and merchants opened places of business and a pattern of dependence and specialization gradually developed. People had more leisure time and with this came an increase in sporting activities. Those who had time and some money to spare sent east for equipment and local sporting clubs arose. The police detachments often lead the way in this regard. Many of the members of the force had come from eastern Canada or Great Britain equipped with playing experience in cricket and track and field, and their present occupation naturally lead to rifle competition. In Fort Saskatchewan, Fort Macleod and Lethbridge the police formed teams to compete with the civilian population and with at least two teams available, sports clubs came into being. The merchants, including the

¹² Hardy, op. cit. p. 61.

Hudson's Bay Company, donated cups, trophies and other various prizes to help stimulate competition.

With the towns and communities competing against each other, a feeling of pride developed and in most cases the towns supported their local clubs in competitions with other teams.

CHAPTER III

SUMMER-ORIENTATED SPORTS AND GAMES

Baseball

The game of baseball was played on a challenge basis early in the 1880's in Edmonton, Calgary and Fort Macleod. The North West Mounted Police at Fort Macleod played in the spring of 1883, with the losing team buying supper for the winner at Aunties.¹³ A club was never formed in that community until late in the 1890's when the schoolboys formed teams. The Edmonton Baseball Club was in operation in the summer of 1884 with twenty-five active members practicing three times a week.¹⁴ However, by 1886, the club had disappeared, and until 1889 the only games played in Edmonton were on a challenge basis as part of the sports days on May twenty-fourth and July first. The summer of 1887 saw baseball clubs in operation in Calgary, Medicine Hat and Lethbridge. The first interurban competition was played in Medicine Hat on July 5, 1887, when the home team defeated the visiting Lethbridge team by a score of seventeen to fifteen.¹⁵ A return match was held in Lethbridge on August 8, 1887, when all the places of business in town were closed while the game was in progress. The home team had been practicing hard since their loss and were successful in defeating Medicine Hat thirteen to ten.¹⁶

¹³ Macleod Gazette, March 14, 1883.

¹⁴ Edmonton Bulletin, May 31, 1884.

¹⁵ Lethbridge News, July 5, 1887.

¹⁶ Ibid, Aug. 10, 1887.

In 1888 season witnessed the first baseball tournament and saw the game spread to the school-yard. In August, Medicine Hat and Donald played in the Calgary tournament, with Medicine Hat winning and as a consequence were acclaimed by the Medicine Hat Times as the North West Champions. The Calgary club had played Banff earlier in the year, and following the tournament the first nine defeated the second nine thirty-five to twenty-four to win the Ogburn Cup, representing the championship for local teams.¹⁷ The interest in baseball continued to grow in Lethbridge as indicated by the formation of school teams, however the level of play was still at an early stage of development. The local baseball club, in preparing for the Medicine Hat tournament, played the tennis club and lost at their own game.¹⁸ Medicine Hat had a large, active club and the popularity of the game continued to increase. Various groups were challenging each other and in the month of July alone the civilians and the Canadian Pacific Railway employees played a series of games which ended in a tie, two games each. Medicine Hat held the second tournament of the year with teams from Lethbridge, Calgary and Donald taking part in the three-day event. This was the first extensive use of the railway by sports teams, and the Canadian Pacific Railway encouraged such excursions by offering special rates.

The Edmonton club was revived in 1889 and several games were played between the first and second nine. The same year the Calgary club was marvelling at the town of Donald, British Columbia, which had raised six hundred dollars for their baseball club. At a meeting the Calgary club decided to try and raise funds so they could hire a "first class battery"

¹⁷ Calgary Herald, April 15, 1887.

¹⁸ Lethbridge News, September 12, 1888.

from the east and then play some of the British Columbia clubs.¹⁹ This did not get past the planning stage, as there was no further mention of hiring players in the newspapers, and no games were played against British Columbia clubs. The game was at its peak in Calgary at this time with school, junior and senior teams all active, and school teams were also active in Medicine Hat. The club in Medicine Hat was attempting to keep up with the teams in eastern Canada and the United States and adopted the rules changes of the American Baseball Association for 1889. The rules changes were as follows:

1. Foul tips will not be out.
2. Four balls instead of five give a base.
3. Runner need not touch bases on returning on a foul.
4. Bunted balls will not be strikes unless wilfully blocked off foul.
5. If thrown ball hits umpire, runner must return to base he started from.
6. Extra player or tenth man may take his place on the field at the end of any inning.
7. The umpire shall not reverse any decision on the testimony of any player or bystander.
8. Base runner entitled to take one base without being put out if batted ball hits the umpire on fair ground.
9. Players must come in from field and seat themselves on players' bench at conclusion of their half in the field.²⁰

Lethbridge, in 1889, had two teams and they succeeded in defeating Medicine Hat in a home and home series. The team from Medicine Hat later that year travelled to the Moose Jaw tournament, where they took first place, defeating teams from Regina and Qu'Appelle.²¹

In 1890-91 the enthusiasm for the game dropped sharply in Lethbridge and Medicine Hat. The only game recorded for the 1891 season in Lethbridge was a win over the Great Falls club during the celebration of the completion

¹⁹ Calgary Herald, May 22, 1889.

²⁰ Medicine Hat Times, April 27, 1889.

²¹ Ibid., August 17, 1889.

of the railway between Lethbridge and Great Falls, Montana. This marked the first time that a team from Alberta had travelled to the United States.

In Medicine Hat the 1891 season saw the club inactive, due to the fact that several key players had moved.²²

Calgary continued to have several local teams but interurban competition had stopped. In Edmonton the highlight of the 1890 season was the baseball club's defeat of the curling club by a score of thirty-six to five. The completion of the Calgary-Edmonton Railway in 1891 gave Edmonton the opportunity for interclub competition. On August 8th the Calgary team, after receiving one hundred dollars from the Edmonton club for expenses, arrived by train and promptly defeated their hosts twenty-eight to twenty-two.²³

For the next several years the Edmonton district was the scene of expansion both in population and baseball teams (Fig. 1). In 1892 Edmonton and Calgary played a home and home series but the following year little mention is made of the Calgary teams. South Edmonton, later to be called Strathcona, had been growing in size and in 1893 they fielded a team to play several games against Edmonton. The popularity of the game continued to grow, with two Edmonton school teams playing in 1894.

By 1895 Medicine Hat had re-organized its club and Cardston had formed a baseball association.²⁴ Clubs were also active in Canmore and Mountain View. The Medicine Hat club was anxious to build up a good team and succeeded in getting a catcher by the name of Bell, from Seattle, to form a "battery"

²² Ibid., January 29, 1891.

²³ Edmonton Bulletin, August 8, 1891.

²⁴ Lethbridge News, May 4, 1893.

with the local pitcher, O'Hara.²⁵

The status of baseball remained relatively stable until 1900, with some teams becoming inactive and others organizing for the first time. In the period 1897 to 1899 teams were active in Sturgeon, Stoney Plain, Edmonton (Fig. 2), Lacombe, Conjuring Creek, Ponoka, Red Deer, Innisfail, Olds, Calgary, Cardston, Medicine Hat and Canmore.

Bicycling

The bicycle made its appearance in Alberta late in the 1880's. At first they were used mainly for pleasure but as more people from eastern Canada arrived, bicycle clubs and races were inaugurated. The first mention of a club was in the Calgary Herald in 1887 in the form of a notice of a meeting to elect officers for the coming season, which indicates perhaps that a club was already in existence.²⁶ The Calgary club held regular rides that year and, on July first, held races as part of the sports day.

Edmonton and Lethbridge had formed clubs by 1893. The Chinooks of Lethbridge, in their first year of operation, affiliated with the Canadian Wheelman's Association and held several races, including the first territorial championship races. The territorial meet was part of the Lethbridge Turf and Athletic Association Fall Race Meet, with the one mile race being won by Freeman of Lethbridge. The term territorial really meant little as no riders from outside Lethbridge participated.²⁷

²⁵ Medicine Hat News, July 23, 1896.

²⁶ Calgary Herald, January 28, 1887.

²⁷ Lethbridge News, September 14, 1893.



Figure 1. Edmonton Baseball Team, 1891.
(E. Brown Collection)



Figure 2. Sturgeon and Edmonton Baseball Teams, 1895.
(E. Brown Collection)

Medicine Hat organized a club in 1894 and proceeded to build a fenced-in track and used cinders to try and improve the track surface.²⁸ The first open meet occurred that year when some of the Medicine Hat riders went to Lethbridge for the races on the 24th of May, and both Lethbridge and Medicine Hat sent riders to the Calgary meet on July 1st. Wingley and Freeman of Lethbridge won all nine races in Calgary during the three day meet.²⁹ The third big meet of the year was held in Medicine Hat, where the prizes totalled three hundred dollars. Eleven events made up the program, and riders from Winnipeg, Regina, Calgary and Lethbridge, including McCulloch, the Manitoba champion, and Wingley, the North West champion, took part.

In 1895 Calgary, Edmonton, Lethbridge and Medicine Hat all held at least one meet each and the riders continued to practice between races. The first time Edmonton sent riders to meet the club was an immediate success, as McNamara won the half-mile North West Championship race in Regina.³⁰ The Medicine Hat club opened its new track for the May 24th races in 1896. Bicycle Park consisted of a half-mile banked track, thirty feet wide, with a six foot rise on the turns and a three foot rise on the stretch; a first for western Canada.³¹

Several territorial meets were held in 1897 to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee (Fig. 3). The Calgary meet was a two day event and included the following events:

²⁸ Medicine Hat News, May 17, 1893.

²⁹ Lethbridge News, July 25, 1894.

³⁰ Medicine Hat News, August 8, 1895.

³¹ Ibid., May 28, 1896.

1. Novice, 1 mile
2. Championship (open), 1 mile.
3. One mile handicap.
4. Boys race.
5. Tandem race.
6. Indian race.³²

The Fort Macleod club, formed in 1895, and the Edmonton club did not put the emphasis on races but had weekly rides and social events as the main events of the club programs. Red Deer had several wheelers by 1898 and all the clubs previously mentioned were still in existence in 1899.³³

³² Calgary Herald, September 9, 1897.

³³ Ibid., May 5, 1898.



Figure 3. McNamara and trophies, Edmonton, 1897.
(E. Brown Collection)

Cricket

The game of cricket requires eleven players, and its introduction into the Alberta area was delayed until places of settlement had grown large enough to permit two teams to be formed. The North West Mounted Police, of whom some had previous cricket experience, were the moving force in introducing the game. In the 1880's all the larger police posts had cricket teams and games between members of the force are recorded as early as 1881. Major Cotton mentioned that "... the last time cricket was played at this time of year was January 1-2 of 1881."³⁴ This may indicate that the game was played before 1881, but no records exist to verify this.

With the police having cricket teams the civilian population soon formed teams of their own to provide added competition. The first club formed was in Edmonton during the 1881 season. It is of interest to note that this club was wholly civilian, whereas all the other clubs in the early 1880's had a good percentage of police members. The game created some interest, and the Edmonton Cricket Club celebrated the twenty-fourth of May, 1882, with the first match for which a score has survived. Before some fifty spectators, Petrie defeated Tetu seventy-three to sixty-three in two innings.³⁵ The Fort Saskatchewan police detachment, after witnessing the game, promptly borrowed the Edmonton club's equipment so that they might practice for a game against the Edmonton club.³⁶

In 1883 the first match involving teams from different localities was played in Fort Macleod when the Calgary detachment defeated the Macleod

³⁴ Macleod Gazette, December 29, 1885.

³⁵ Edmonton Bulletin, May 27, 1882.

³⁶ Ibid., June 10, 1882.

police team.³⁷ By 1885 cricket clubs were active in Edmonton, Fort Saskatchewan, Fort Macleod and Calgary, with Medicine Hat forming its first club one year later. With the Riel Rebellion and the influx of soldiers from eastern Canada, numerous matches were played between both club, and non-club teams; however, following the withdrawal of the troops, the clubs became relatively inactive for about two years.

The Alberta Cricket Club was formed in Calgary in 1888, and the same year the Fort Macleod club was re-organized; however matches were confined to local teams involving games such as married versus single men and police versus civilians.³⁸ The Edmonton club was re-formed in 1889 and on July 1, they defeated a team from Clover Bar (Fig. 4). The Lethbridge club, which had been formed in 1886, played host to the Fort Macleod club during the summer race meet in 1889 and defeated them. This was the first of many meetings between these two clubs, and it was not until 1891 that Lethbridge lost to Fort Macleod.³⁹ Medicine Hat handed Lethbridge its only loss in 1889, but after that first match Lethbridge did not lose to Medicine Hat until the 1894 season. Lethbridge was the leading cricket team in the south until several players moved; by 1895 they no longer dominated the game. In Calgary the Alberta Club was content to organize local matches, except in one instance. They arranged to play several cricket clubs on the coast in 1890 and made plans to raise the money for expenses. A smoking concert was planned to raise the money, but it was never held, and the cricket club remained in Calgary.⁴⁰

³⁷ Macleod Gazette, April 4, 1883.

³⁸ Calgary Herald, April 11, 1888.

³⁹ Lethbridge News, July 24, 1889.

⁴⁰ Calgary Herald, September 3, 1890.

The period between 1890 and 1895 saw cricket clubs active in all parts of the future province. In the northern area, Edmonton, Fort Saskatchewan, Clover Bar and South Edmonton all had active clubs, and numerous games were played among the four teams. Even though the four teams were within easy travelling distance a league was never formed and competition for a trophy never resulted. The games were played for the enjoyment derived and the social events that accompanied the games. The Calgary club was still active, and after the railway was completed to Edmonton a series of home and home matches between Edmonton and Calgary were played in 1892, 1893 and 1894.⁴¹ In the south the Lethbridge club was the most active, travelling to Medicine Hat and Fort Macleod. In 1890 Lethbridge hosted a tournament. Maple Creek and Medicine Hat attended the three day event and then returned home, leaving Lethbridge undefeated. The following year Medicine Hat held a tournament and again Lethbridge won.⁴²

Before the turn of the century, a number of new clubs had developed while the older, established clubs, not quite as active as in previous years, were still playing several games a year. Edmonton and Calgary each had two clubs, while Red Deer, Pine Lake, Millarville, Innisfail, Banff and Strathcona were all active on the cricket scene. In the Calgary tournament of 1899 the Pine Lake and Edmonton teams combined to represent the northern half of Alberta, while Calgary and Millarville represented the southern half of the district. The first Alberta district championship was won by the north.⁴³

⁴¹ Edmonton Bulletin, May 22, 1894.

⁴² Lethbridge News, August 26, 1891.

⁴³ Calgary Herald, July 13, 1899.

This fact, that it was not until 1899, that a championship was played, indicates that cricket was somewhat different than most of the other sports where trophies and championships made an early appearance. The English theory of playing for the enjoyment of the game was evidently still an important factor in the west.

Croquet

The only mentions of this game were in the Edmonton Bulletin during the years 1888, 1889 and 1890. The game was played as a form of amusement at lawn parties. A typical news item read:

The first croquet game of the season was played on Saturday on Jas McDonald's lawn during the lawn party.⁴⁴

There is no indication as to the age groups or how often the game was played.

⁴⁴ Edmonton Bulletin, March 2, 1889.



Figure 4. Edmonton Cricket Team, 1889.
(E. Brown Collection)

Golf

Golf was introduced in the Macleod district in the summer of 1895.⁴⁵ In order to play the game properly, a golf course or links, as it was then called, had to be developed and this required cooperation among the players. In October, 1895, a club was formed in Fort Macleod and a nine hole links was laid out below the police barracks. At their spring meeting in 1896 the president, Dr. Haultain, donated a silver cup which was to go to the player with the best score of the month.⁴⁶ The club was very active during the first full year of operation and in the fall the Hudson's Bay Company donated the Chipman Cup. It was to be played for annually at the Macleod links, with the cup going to the player with the lowest score after thirty-six holes. The Chipman cup signified "... amateur golf championship of Southern Alberta", and was still being played for in 1900.⁴⁷ In Edmonton, R.A. Butlan had been elected president of the Edmonton Golf Club, in April of 1896. The club established a five hole links where the present Victoria Park golf course is today, and in their first season, started weekly tournaments and played every Saturday for a gold button⁴⁸ (Fig. 5).

In 1897 the Calgary Golf Club was formed, and in 1898 they opened their new course.⁴⁹ All three clubs held competitions of various kinds, but from the newspaper reports it is hard to determine how much golf was

⁴⁵ Macleod Gazette, August 15, 1895.

⁴⁶ Ibid., April 3, 1896.

⁴⁷ Ibid., October 2, 1896.

⁴⁸ Edmonton Bulletin, October 15, 1896.

⁴⁹ Calgary Herald, September 22, 1898.

played on a casual basis with no prizes at stake. The women were accepted into the clubs, and at Fort Macleod the ladies had exclusive use of the links on Mondays.⁵⁰ The various competitions that were held included putting, driving for accuracy and distance, medal play, mixed foursomes, and men's and ladies' match play. Due to the fact that golf was one of the more expensive sports, with clubs to purchase and a membership fee to pay, the game's popularity was somewhat limited. Several attempts were made to try and reduce the cost. The Calgary club, with forty members in 1898, offered a special country membership fee in order to encourage people living outside the city to play more, and the Macleod club, in 1899, waived its membership fee for present members as its bank balance was adequate for that season.^{51, 52} In 1899 some golfers in Medicine Hat laid out a course, and before the year was over a club had been formed in that community.

⁵⁰ Macleod Gazette, October 30, 1896.

⁵¹ Calgary Herald, April 6, 1899.

⁵² Macleod Gazette, April 7, 1899.



Figure 5. Members of the Edmonton Golf Club, 1899.
(E. Brown Collection)

Horse Racing

The horse was in the west before the Europeans arrived, and the Indians soon discovered that a good horse would bring sizable gains when traded to the new inhabitants of the west. The Hudson's Bay Company post, where the Indians and the Europeans did most of their business in the early 1800's, soon became an ideal place for challenge races. MacRae, in talking about Fort Edmonton in 1855, makes the following comment:

Adjoining the cultivated fields is a very fine, level race-ground of two miles or more in length; horse racing being one of the chief amusements of the place during the summer season....⁵³

McDougall, in writing about the 1850's, comments that at almost any meeting of Indians and whites, a horse race may result.

While we were in camp a great race was run between some famous horses. This was a trial of endurance and wind as well as speed. The race was from camp straight out and around an island of timber and back home. The whole distance must have been between five and six miles, and although many of these Indians were inveterate gamblers, yet because of the presence of the missionaries this was omitted from the program.⁵⁴

By the early 1880's horse racing was popular in Edmonton, Calgary and Fort Macleod, with turf associations soon developing. In Calgary, as in the other centers, match races were almost as old as the settlements themselves. Betting was a big part of these match races and in 1883, "Buckskin" won several match races in Calgary, one worth two hundred dollars.⁵⁵ With the number of ranches increasing and with a growing interest in horses, the Alberta Turf Association was formed in October of 1885.⁵⁶ A board of

⁵³ A.O. MacRae, A History of Alberta, Western Canada History Co., 1912, p. 199.

⁵⁴ John McDougall, Forest, Lake and Prairie, Toronto: William Briggs, 1895, p. 214.

⁵⁵ Calgary Herald, October 3, 1883.

⁵⁶ Ibid., October 14, 1887.

governors was set up to raise \$15,000 worth of capital stock by selling shares at one hundred dollars each. The first meet of the new association was held in the fall of 1886. The program included races for trotters, sprints on a best-of-three basis, as well as a steeplechase race. By the following year a track, complete with stables and a clubhouse, had been completed at Owen's farm. The turf meet held in July brought six hundred spectators, most of whom engaged in betting on their favorite horse.⁵⁷

In Fort Macleod the North West Mounted Police had brought their own horses, and races among themselves, after a friendly wager, occurred quite frequently. This practice was still common in 1882 when several match races occurred during the summer and fall. Some horses from Montana were brought up to race and the Piegan Indians had several horses they would run if the price was right.⁵⁸

As part of the sports day on May 24, 1883, several horse races were held. The first organized race program in Fort Macleod included the following events:

1. half-mile hurdle race
2. half-mile flat race
3. six hundred yard flat race
4. quarter-mile flat race
5. six hundred yard scrub race
6. kyuse (Indian) race⁵⁹

More horse races were held as part of the sports days, on May twenty-fourth

⁵⁷ Ibid., July 15, 1887.

⁵⁸ Macleod Gazette, July 30, 1882.

⁵⁹ Ibid., June 4, 1883.

and July first, and they also became part of the fall fair. By 1886 the races at the fall fair had a total prize value of six hundred dollars. The Southern Alberta Turf Association came into existence in 1888, and it took over the assets of the Macleod Agricultural Association. Their first meet was a three day affair and attracted horses from Pincher Creek, Lethbridge and Medicine Hat along with six hundred spectators.⁶⁰ The races were run under the rules of the Dominion Turf Association, and the spring race meet was to become an annual affair in Fort Macleod.

In Edmonton, the river flats, north of the presentday power house, had been in use since the 1850's as a race track, and in 1881 the editor of the Bulletin, Frank Oliver, who was apparently a race fan, advocated that a half-mile track be built.⁶¹ In 1881 two race meets were held, both apparently successful, but no turf association was formed. Starting in 1882 the horse races became part of the sports day programs, but the prizes were small. The money was to be gained in the match races, some held on the track and others on Fraser Avenue.

Lethbridge and Medicine Hat were later in forming turf associations than Fort Macleod, but the challenge races were just as popular. Medicine Hat had several races as part of the Agricultural Fair in 1887, and by 1891 the Medicine Hat Turf Association and Stock Company had been formed.⁶² Lethbridge did not hold an official race meet until after the Lethbridge Turf and Athletic Association had been formed in 1890.⁶³ The turf associations

⁶⁰ Ibid., May 30, 1888.

⁶¹ Edmonton Bulletin, March 7, 1881.

⁶² Medicine Hat Times, July 9, 1891.

⁶³ Lethbridge News, March 26, 1890.

in the various centers held at least one and often two meets a year, but this varied from year to year. Calgary and Fort Macleod joined the North West Circuit Association which included towns east to Winnipeg.⁶⁴ A problem arose, however, in that Calgary and Fort Macleod had little say in the establishment of the dates for the meets, so they withdrew in 1891, just one year after entering. The program of the annual meets held by the turf associations varied from place to place and year to year. Some of the events in the various meets included polo pony races, quarter-mile dog trot race, gentleman's driving race, and bronco riding. From a financial point of view most of the meets were successful, judging by the amount of money in prizes. The Macleod meet in 1890 offered \$2,070.00 while the Lethbridge fall meet in 1891 advertized \$2,500.00 in prizes. A point of interest in connection with Edmonton, is that by reading the Edmonton Bulletin, one gets the impression that the races were part of the sports day card and that no turf association existed. However, an article appeared in the Medicine Hat News indicating that the Edmonton Turf Association had a capital of \$10,000.00 raised through the sale of twenty-five dollar shares.⁶⁵

Other centers soon developed sports days to celebrate the May twenty-four and July first holidays, and horse races made up part of the program at most of them. Pincher Creek, High River, Red Deer, Sheep Crests, Innisfail, Lacombe, Banff, Ponoka, Fort Saskatchewan, Wetaskiwin, Stoney Plain, Lesser Slave Lake, Leduc and Cardston were among the communities holding horse races (Fig. 6). Red Deer and Banff had formed turf associations by 1900 and, in Innisfail, the ladies were included in the program with a race of their own.

⁶⁴ Macleod Gazette, June 12, 1890.

⁶⁵ Medicine Hat News, August 9, 1894.



Figure 6. Jerry Boyce and horse, Edmonton, 1900.
(E. Brown Collection)

Rodeo Events

The cowboy of the early west, in his daily routine, herded cattle, roped steers, broke new horses, and spent many hours a day in the saddle. During round-ups, when large numbers of the cowboys were together, competition in aspects of their daily work became a regular occurrence.

The Fort Macleod Agricultural Society, at its fall fair in 1891, included two extra events, steer roping and bronco riding.⁶⁶ The response to the idea was not recorded, but by 1895 B. Stewart and B. Welsh, from Fort Macleod, entered the bronco riding event in the Territorial Fair in Regina.⁶⁷ From 1895 on, the Fort Macleod Fall Fair included steer roping and bronco riding as part of its program. The Fort Macleod district was good ranch country and the rodeo events were well received. The steer roping was against time, as it is to-day, and the bronco riding had a time element as well, but it is not known if style was part of the scoring system. Jeff Davis was the perennial winner of both events from 1896 to 1898 and in the opinion of the Macleod Gazette ". . . was the best in the west".⁶⁸

Polo

Southern Alberta is characterized by open prairie; add to this horses and some "gentlemen ranchers" of British ancestry and the consequence was the appearance of polo. By 1890 polo was being played in Calgary, Pincher Creek and Fort Macleod. The club in Fort Macleod was organized in 1891 under the direction of the police, and that fall they defeated the Pincher

⁶⁶ Macleod Gazette, October 27, 1891.

⁶⁷ Ibid., August 9, 1895.

⁶⁸ Ibid., September 30, 1898.

Creek team four to two.⁶⁹ The games at this time were being played in four, fifteen minute quarters with four men per team.

In 1892 the interclub competition began in earnest. Colonel Macleod, of the North West Mounted Police, donated a cup and a tournament was held during race week. Teams from Pincher Creek, Calgary, High River and Fort Macleod played for the cup, which was won by the Fort Macleod team.⁷⁰ That same year Calgary put up a trophy and High River won out over Fort Macleod and Calgary in the tournament.⁷¹ In 1893 Calgary won the Colonel Macleod Cup while Fort Macleod, in turn, won the Calgary trophy. In 1894 four tournaments were held. The results were as follows:

1. The Colonel Macleod Cup - won by Fort Macleod.
2. Calgary Trophy - won by Calgary.
3. Pincher Creek Trophy - won by Beaver Creek
4. Beaver Creek tournament - won by Beaver Creek.⁷²

In the period from 1895 to 1897 the newspapers reported very little about the game of polo. In 1897 the Southern Alberta Polo Association was formed in Pincher Creek and the Pincher Creek tournament of that year was won by a group who called themselves the "Freebooters".⁷³ That same year Calgary defeated Sheep Creek and High River for the Calgary trophy. The grade of horses being raised in the Calgary district was of a good quality, as indicated by the fact that H.D. Critchley shipped a carload of polo

⁶⁹ Ibid., July 30, 1891.

⁷⁰ Ibid., June 3, 1892.

⁷¹ Ibid., September 8, 1892.

⁷² Calgary Herald, October 12, 1899.

⁷³ Ibid., July 9, 1897.

ponies for the English market in the fall of 1899.⁷⁴ Teams were active in High River, Fort Macleod, Pincher Creek, Calgary and Livingstone at the turn of the century, and, in relation to the rest of Canada, Careless and Brown refer to southern Alberta as the polo capital of Canada.⁷⁵

Lacrosse

The game of lacrosse was not a native pastime among the Plains Indians of the Alberta area, and like most other team sports lacrosse did not appear in the new settlements until the 1880's due to a lack of numbers. The early areas of development were in the Edmonton and Calgary districts. Lacrosse equipment was available in Edmonton in 1882 and several games were played that year. C.W. Sutter and W. Ibbaston were captains of the two teams and after the weather turned cold a meeting was held to talk about forming a club. In March of 1883 the Edmonton Lacrosse Club was formed.⁷⁶ The club decided to follow the rules of the National Amateur Lacrosse Association of Canada and interest was running high, with regular practices being held. A problem that was common among teams in the period prior to 1900 caused the Edmonton club to disband in 1885; there were no other clubs to play against and competition among club members soon became less and less of a challenge. In Calgary the Alberta Lacrosse club was in operation in 1884 with two groups taking part, the citizens and the police.⁷⁷ Not a great deal is known of the club's activities except that it was still active in

⁷⁴ Calgary Herald, October 12, 1899.

⁷⁵ J.M.S. Careless, R.C. Brown, The Canadians 1867-1967, Toronto: Macmillan Company of Canada, 1967, p. 607.

⁷⁶ Edmonton Bulletin, March 31, 1883.

⁷⁷ Calgary Herald, June 25, 1884.

1890 and by this time other clubs had been formed, and, with interclub competition, the Calgary teams became more active.

Residents of Lethbridge had, by 1890, witnessed several games of lacrosse on the town square. Interest was sufficient enough to result in a club being formed that same year. The Calgary club, anxious for a game with another club, invited Lethbridge to play for the Territorial Championship. The Lethbridge club travelled to Calgary where, before three hundred and fifty spectators, the Calgary club won three games to two.⁷⁸ After their win the Calgary team accepted a challenge to play a combined Victoria-Vancouver team who were on their way to Toronto for a tournament. The team from the west coast never made the trip but the following year the Lethbridge press reported that the Calgary team had lost in the Vancouver Invitation Tournament.⁷⁹ No mention was made in the Calgary Herald of the Vancouver trip. For the Lethbridge club, the loss to Calgary was their last for five years, during which time they defeated teams from Medicine Hat, Fort Macleod, Calgary and Regina. The Fort Macleod club had been organized in 1892, just a year after J. Morris, formerly of Lethbridge, had introduced the game to the residents of the Macleod district.⁸⁰

The period from 1895 to 1897 seems to have been a poor time for lacrosse, with most of the clubs becoming inactive. The Lethbridge era of domination in the south had come to an end. The police had formed a second club in 1895 and the number of good players on the old Lethbridge team was reduced. The Edmonton club, after a reorganization in 1892, played in

⁷⁸ Ibid., August 27, 1890.

⁷⁹ Lethbridge News, May 1, 1891.

⁸⁰ Macleod Gazette, June 8, 1891.

Calgary that same year, then reverted to the club games of the early 1880's. The club was still active in 1899 and continued to be so as they played Fort Saskatchewan early in the 1900's. Fort Macleod, Lethbridge and Medicine Hat all had club meetings and held practices in 1899, but no interclub games were recorded; the Calgary club had been inactive since 1897.

Rifle Shooting

The rifle came west with the fur trader and in some instances the Indians, who had travelled east with furs, returned with the rifle before the fur trader. The rifle served as a necessary piece of equipment both for survival and defence. It is hard to determine when target shooting stopped being a necessity and became a leisure time activity. The North West Mounted Police built rifle ranges, but these were built primarily for police rifle training and practice.

The year 1884 saw two rifle associations formed. Colonel Macleod of the North West Mounted Police organized a club in Fort Macleod, where they adopted the Manitoba Rifle Association rules and held several matches on the police range.⁸¹ Calgary also formed an association, again with the police providing leadership and the range.

With the Riel Rebellion of 1885, most of the European inhabitants of the west became conscious of the value of the rifle, and one of the best ways to get practice and at the same time engage in friendly competition was to join a rifle association. During the rebellion the police posts were fortified, while some of the settlers joined groups such as the Alberta Mounted Rifles in Calgary. The movement of troops through such centers as Calgary and Edmonton, with frequent stop-overs, provided excellent

⁸¹ Macleod Gazette, November 14, 1884.

opportunities for competition between the various military units and other groups. In Calgary, the Alberta Mounted Rifles met the Calgary Light Infantry, while the 65th Company, Militia shot against the Hudson's Bay Company employees in Edmonton.^{82, 83} Partly as a result of the increased military activity in 1885, two new rifle associations were formed in 1886. The Edmonton Rifle Association, affiliated with the Dominion Rifle Association, had forty members and held two matches for club members in its first year of operation.⁸⁴ In Lethbridge the association was under the guidance of president H.F. Greenwood. The club held a married versus single match for members during the summer, and in December sponsored a turkey shoot to raise funds.⁸⁵ Fort Saskatchewan formed an association in 1887.

By 1888 the telegraph was being used to further interclub competition. Clubs found it much easier to telegraph their results rather than travel themselves to compete against other clubs. Fort Macleod and Calgary arranged a match in June, then telegraphed the results to each other.⁸⁶ Following this, Fort Macleod competed in telegraphic meets with Battleford, Prince Albert, and Brandon. This, apparently, proved rather successful, for in 1889 all of the rifle associations in Alberta joined in the Dominion Rifle Association's team matches via the telegraph. A series of matches was arranged with associations in the North West Territories, Manitoba, and as far east as Ottawa. Fort Saskatchewan, Edmonton, Calgary, Lethbridge and

⁸² Calgary Herald, July 29, 1885.

⁸³ Edmonton Bulletin, May 30, 1885

⁸⁴ Ibid., July 10, 1886.

⁸⁵ Lethbridge News, December 22, 1886.

⁸⁶ Macleod Gazette, June 27, 1888.

Fort Macleod all gained some measure of success but none of the Alberta based associations won any of the team honours. In the North West League Championship matches of 1889, Prince Albert took first place while Calgary placed third.⁸⁷ The popularity of the telegraphic meets was short-lived, for in 1890 the Lethbridge association became inactive and, by 1893, most of the associations were not competing in the North West League.

During the height of popularity of the rifle associations, from about 1885 to 1895, several of the associations held annual matches and various trophies were competed for. In Fort Macleod the challenge cup was the big event and the fall matches became known as the Challenge Cup Matches. The Challenge Cup was first awarded in 1886 and the record of winners is as follows:

1886 - Dr. Kennedy

1887 - Dr. Kennedy

1888 - J.J. Howson

1889 - J.J. Howson

1890 - J.J. Howson

A rule under which the cup was competed for was that if anyone won the cup three years in a row, then it was his to keep. Howson was presented with the Challenge Cup in 1890. In order to replace it, the Davis Trophy was put up for competition in 1891 by Mr. Davis, a member of the Assembly at that time. The Edmonton association held its first annual fall match in 1886 and these were held annually until 1897.⁸⁸ Fort Saskatchewan followed in 1887 and, except for 1896, their annual matches were still being

⁸⁷ Calgary Herald, July 10, 1889.

⁸⁸ Edmonton Bulletin, October 22, 1896.

held in 1899. The matches themselves involved both individual and team events, with the range being anywhere from one hundred to four hundred yards. There are several instances where the ladies were involved and in a match in Calgary in 1888, thirty-two ladies entered in the July 1st matches.⁸⁹

By 1895 the number of active members in the various associations had decreased considerably, with Fort Macleod having difficulty fielding a team of ten in 1892. Fort Saskatchewan and Edmonton were the only centers where rifle associations were operational in 1899.

Trap Shooting

The North West Territorial government enacted legislation in the 1880's establishing hunting seasons for various forms of wildlife. The repeated practice of hunting game out of season was one factor leading to the establishment of gun clubs in Alberta. The Calgary Gun and Angling Club, under president E. Hodder, was established in 1887.⁹⁰ Within its first year of operation it held two meetings to review the existing game laws and recommended that the Indian be required to observe the hunting seasons.⁹¹ The Edmonton club also came about in part as a result of the concern for protecting game out of season. In its club constitution was a section that dealt with the game laws and offered a reward to anyone aiding in the conviction of persons guilty of hunting out of season.⁹²

With hunting only legal during certain times of the year, practice for the game seasons took the form of trap shooting. A club in Fort Macleod

⁸⁹ Calgary Herald, July 10, 1888.

⁹⁰ Calgary Herald, July 22, 1887.

⁹¹ Ibid., August 5, 1887.

⁹² Edmonton Bulletin, March 1, 1890.

had used glass balls as targets in 1887 but the club became inactive until 1892.⁹³ The Calgary club used live snowbirds as targets, while the Lethbridge club, established in 1889, and the Edmonton club, used clay birds. The Edmonton club, in an attempt to standardize rules, adopted the rules of the American Trap Shooting Club in 1893.⁹⁴ Fort Saskatchewan also had a gun club at this time and both clubs attended each other's tournaments. No trophies or club championships were declared, which was in contrast to the clubs in the south.

The Bow River Trap Shooting Club in Calgary held an open tournament in 1894, and by 1899 the Critchley-Lesson Cup for the best individual score had become the highlight of the club tournament.^{95, 96} As an indication of the status of the club in 1899, it had just completed a new club house, had cages for two thousand pigeons and was holding weekly sweepstake matches.⁹⁷ The Calgary club relied basically on club members and local shooters to provide the competition for each other. In Lethbridge, Fort Macleod, and Pincher Creek the tournaments were the drawing magnets upon which the clubs thrived. The Hamilton Powder Company presented both the Fort Macleod and Lethbridge clubs with silver medals for competition among the club members.^{98, 99} The winners of the silver medals received a trip to Winnipeg to shoot for

⁹³ Macleod Gazette, March 22, 1887.

⁹⁴ Edmonton Bulletin, April 27, 1893.

⁹⁵ Macleod Gazette, October 13, 1894.

⁹⁶ Calgary Herald, November 9, 1899.

⁹⁷ Ibid., May 18, 1899.

⁹⁸ Macleod Gazette, August 14, 1892.

⁹⁹ Lethbridge News, August 21, 1892.

the gold medal. Tournament competition had started in earnest. Fort Macleod held an open tournament in 1893 in connection with the race meet, and successfully defended its team trophy by defeating teams from Pincher Creek and Lethbridge.¹⁰⁰ The following year Lethbridge and Pincher Creek put up challenge trophies and a series of three tournaments per year helped maintain club interest.

The Fort Macleod club did not hold a tournament after 1896, and no further mention of the club was made in the newspapers after 1897. Elsewhere, new clubs were coming into existence, the Red Deer Club in 1894, the Medicine Hat club in 1895, and the Wetaskiwin Club in 1899. The trap shooting clubs met the twentieth century with increasing memberships and interest.

Soccer

Soccer was perhaps the first team sport to be played in the Alberta area. The Hudson's Bay Company forts were the scenes of the early games, and according to McDougall". . . it was the national game of the North West".¹⁰¹ The earliest reference to the game of soccer was made by McDougall in 1862.

"The next day we had dog-races, and foot-races, and football, and the fun was fast and furious".¹⁰² Soccer was played yearly, often both in winter and summer, and eventually clubs were formed; and, by 1899, North West Territory Champions were being declared.

The Edmonton and Calgary districts were the areas where the game was

¹⁰⁰ Macleod Gazette, July 7, 1893.

¹⁰¹ McDougall, op. cit., p. 84.

¹⁰² Ibid., p. 266.

most popular. In Edmonton a game was played in February of 1882 for a "round of drinks", at which time J. Inkster's party defeated C. Fraser's group.¹⁰³ The game was quite popular during the winter months in Edmonton, and it was not until the mid 1890's that the games were confined to the summer months. Numerous games were played in the 1880's and in 1889 a soccer club was formed. Under president C. Young the club sent to Toronto for a ball, and decided on red and black as the team colors.

Meanwhile, in Calgary, the Calgary Herald claimed that the first game of soccer in Calgary was played in November of 1883 between two teams representing the police and the town.¹⁰⁴ The first soccer club in Calgary was formed in 1888 and Calgary had at least one active club each year, until 1900.¹⁰⁵ Soccer was being played in Lethbridge by 1886, with a club being organized in 1889. The Calgary Herald reported that ". . . soccer is all the rage in Medicine Hat"; the Medicine Hat Times, conscientious about reporting sporting news, failed to even mention the game.¹⁰⁶

The game continued to grow in popularity in the 1890's, with inter-club games being more frequent, and teams representing the schools started to play each other. Edmonton and Calgary played a home and home series in 1891 following the completion of the railway between the two centers, and then Edmonton reverted to playing local teams for the remainder of the century.¹⁰⁷ South Edmonton, soon to become Strathcona, Clover Bar, Fort

¹⁰³ Edmonton Bulletin, February 2, 1882.

¹⁰⁴ Calgary Herald, November 9, 1883.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., July 5, 1888.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., March 19, 1885.

¹⁰⁷ Edmonton Bulletin, October 31, 1891.

Saskatchewan and Stoney Plain all were represented by soccer teams, and in 1896 Edmonton's second club, the Victoria Soccer Club, was formed. Numerous games were played among the teams but no league was formed and no champions declared. Calgary continued to play other clubs and, in 1898 the Calgary tournament became known as the North West Territories Championship Tournament. Teams from Golden, British Columbia, and High River played against the Calgary North West Mounted Police and Calgary fire brigade teams in 1898 and 1899 and on both occasions the Calgary police won the tournaments.^{108,109}

The game of soccer also proved to be popular with the school children (Fig. 7). In Edmonton, "The School principal, Mr. Campbell, is teaching the school boys soccer in his spare time".¹¹⁰ This was 1891, and by 1893 games against the South Edmonton school boys had become an annual occurrence. The industrial schools in Lacombe, Red Deer, and High River all had teams in the 1890's, and the High River team played in the Calgary senior tournament in 1898. For school teams to travel was a rarity in Alberta at this time, but the hockey team from the school had been to Edmonton, so it was not surprising to see the soccer team in Calgary. In Fort Macleod the only soccer teams were found on the school playgrounds. Both the public school and the school on the Blood reserve had teams, and a series of three games was played in 1897.¹¹¹ From the information available it appears that the school sports teams were extra curricular in nature and their success depended on the willingness of the teachers to devote their time to the game.

¹⁰⁸ Calgary Herald, October 20, 1898.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., October 26, 1899.

¹¹⁰ Edmonton Bulletin, December 18, 1892.

¹¹¹ Macleod Gazette, May 28, 1897.



Figure 7. Schoolboys soccer, Western Canada College,
Calgary. (MacRae, History of Alberta)

Rugby Football

The term football in western Canada during the time period under study could have referred to association football, meaning soccer, or rugby football. The early newspaper reports often only mention the term football, and it is not until fuller reports of the games were written, than it was possible to determine which game was being played. The North West Mounted Police were among the first to play the game of rugby football. The fact that some of the police were from Great Britain or of British descent and had previous playing experience, explains their leading role in this sport. In Calgary and Lethbridge the police had teams by 1891, and were playing under rugby union rules.^{112, 113} The Lethbridge Rugby Football Union, at a meeting in 1891, decided to play in the North West and Manitoba Rugby Association.¹¹⁴ Practices were held regularly but no mention was made in the Lethbridge News of games played against outside teams.

Mention is made of the game being played as early as 1891 in Edmonton but it was not until 1895 that a club was formally organized^{115, 116} (Fig. 8). Fort Saskatchewan also had a club and in 1895 it combined with the Edmonton club to form the Saskatchewan Football Team.¹¹⁷ The combined team entered the Calgary tournament that year and was defeated by the police team from Regina, which eventually won the tournament. The Calgary team

¹¹² Calgary Herald, October 8, 1890.

¹¹³ Lethbridge News, March 31, 1891.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., April 3, 1891.

¹¹⁵ Edmonton Bulletin, March 11, 1895.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., March 18, 1895.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., May 18, 1895.

remained active during the 1890's, as did the Edmonton Club. Edmonton staged a tournament in 1897 in which teams from Sturgeon and Stoney Plain participated, and the following year Fort Saskatchewan defeated Regina in the Calgary tournament to win the North West Championship.¹¹⁸

No rules are given to indicate whether the football being played was the English game or the game of rugby played in the Canadian Rugby Union. By the scoring system it would appear the game was Canadian rugby football. The Lethbridge News reported that the civilians beat the police ". . . one goal and two tries to nil".¹¹⁹ The Canadian Rugby Union rules state:

A match shall be decided by a majority of points. A goal kicked from a try shall score 6 points, from a drop kick 5 points, from a flying kick or free kick 4; a try shall score 4, a safety touch 2 and a rouge 1.¹²⁰

Further to this, the Lethbridge club had affiliated with the Manitoba Rugby Association, which in turn had affiliated with the Canadian Rugby Union. The increase of settlers from eastern Canada helped change the English game to the Canadian version, however, it is not possible to determine if both versions of the game were being played at the same time.

Swimming

The abundance of lakes and rivers in Alberta helps make swimming a popular summer activity. In the period before 1900 swimming was confined mainly to boys and young men. The larger settlements were near water, but the currents of the rivers made swimming slightly hazardous. It was not

¹¹⁸ Macleod Gazette, April 18, 1895.

¹¹⁹ Lethbridge News, March 31, 1891.

¹²⁰ Minutes of First Meeting of Canadian Rugby Union, 1891.



Figure 8. Edmonton Rugby Football Team, 1892.
(E. Brown Collection)

until the late 1890's that people started to travel to the various lakes for picnics and camping trips.

An article in the Edmonton Bulletin in 1894 reported that, "Mr. Killick of Montreal, professor of swimming and demonstrator of life saving....", had been in the area north of Edmonton giving demonstrations and lessons on how to teach swimming to the missionaries at Fort Chippewyan and Vermillion Forks.¹²¹ In 1889 the Medicine Hat Times had tried to form a swim club, but apparently, met with little success.¹²² These two items indicate that people were swimming, but to what extent it is not known. The Calgary Herald published an article, "The Art of Swimming" in 1897, in which women as well as men were encouraged to take up the activity.

This generation has seen the revival of the Olympic games and this generation has seen that man has not weakened as the race grows old, for, judging by expert testimony, these latter day heroes, in many cases, outstripped the deeds of prowess that first shed glory of man's making round the mount of the gods. To enumerate the list of sports in which our youth excels or strives for excellence would be too arduous a task, but among the long list of exercises that makes a man manly and to-day helps to make a woman a well developed woman we miss swimming.¹²³

Tennis

Fort Macleod and Lethbridge dominated the tennis scene prior to 1900 with very active clubs in both communities. The early courts were of grass and most were later converted to dirt or cinder; in one instance, concrete courts were seriously being considered by the Lethbridge club. As is the case with most physical activities, tennis was first played by a few individuals

¹²¹ Edmonton Bulletin, October 1, 1894.

¹²² Medicine Hat Times, June 15, 1889.

¹²³ Calgary Herald, July 29, 1897.

and, as its popularity grew, clubs were formed. Games were being played as early as 1883 in Fort Macleod, but it was not until 1888 that a club was formed.¹²⁴ Lethbridge had meanwhile formed a club in 1887 and held the first tournament that same year.^{125, 126} Four players from Fort Macleod travelled to Lethbridge and played in the tournament. This gives some indication of the time and money that was necessary to be active in this sport, especially when no club existed. The four individuals from Fort Macleod had to pay their own expenses for the trip and, prior to this, they must have put in considerable time and money to get equipment and preparing a court to practice on.

In Edmonton the game of tennis was being played at lawn parties in 1888, with the first club being organized in 1891; it only had seven members in its first year but this had grown to twenty by the following summer.¹²⁷ The Lethbridge club, following its first tournament, remained active, holding open and club tournaments each year. In 1891 H. Higinbotham and F. Godwin helped Lethbridge dominate the tennis scene. Higinbotham had won most of the tournaments since the club was formed and he was successful in winning the singles event in Great Falls, Montana.¹²⁸ This was the summer of 1891, and the railway had just been completed to Great Falls from Lethbridge. Godwin, after defeating Higinbotham in a club tournament that same year, won the men's singles event at the Winnipeg tournament and was presented with

¹²⁴ Macleod Gazette, February 29, 1888.

¹²⁵ Lethbridge News, April 27, 1887.

¹²⁶ Ibid., September 15, 1887.

¹²⁷ Edmonton Bulletin, May 9, 1891.

¹²⁸ Lethbridge News, July 8, 1891.

the Hudson's Bay Cup, which signified the North West and Manitoba Championship.¹²⁹ The following year Godwin wanted to defend his championship in Lethbridge, but the tournament was played in Winnipeg. Godwin again travelled east, played in the tournament, and returned home with the cup. He did not defend his title in 1893.

By 1890, Dunmore had formed a club and, after some comments in the local paper, a club was organized in Medicine Hat early in 1893.¹³⁰ Information concerning tennis in Calgary is rather limited. A club was active in 1890 and it had several courts in 1892 but there was no mention of any open tournaments; meanwhile, in Edmonton, the tennis club was holding regular club tournaments¹³¹ (Fig. 9).

The tournaments usually were played on weekends, and in some cases ran for a whole week, with the games being played in the evenings. The clubs in the southern part of the future province had an advantage in that the climate permitted a longer season, and hence they were able to hold more frequent competitions. The events included men's singles and doubles, ladies' singles, and mixed doubles.

The ladies were members shortly after the clubs were formed, but their acceptance met with varied reactions. In Medicine Hat the ladies' membership fee was only fifty cents, while the men paid two dollars, and in Fort Macleod, ". . . ladies day has been changed to Wednesday due to the ladies aid meeting on Thursdays".^{132, 133} In Lethbridge, women took part in club tournaments

¹²⁹ Ibid., September 2, 1891.

¹³⁰ Medicine Hat Times, April 29, 1894.

¹³¹ E.C. Morrison, D.W.R. Morrison, Calgary 1875-1950, Calgary: Calgary Publishing Company, 1950, p. 231.

¹³² Medicine Hat Times, April 29, 1894.

¹³³ Macleod Gazette, April 4, 1889.

but the use of the courts during the week was another matter. "It was suggested at the last club meeting that ladies day be changed to payday or windy days".¹³⁴

Lacombe, Strathcona and Millarville had formed clubs by 1900, and the older established clubs were using the courts during the summer months. Open tournaments are listed for 1899 but few outside entries were received; club members seemed content to test their skill against fellow club players.

¹³⁴ Ibid., January 20, 1892.



Figure 9. Tennis players, Edmonton, 1900.
(E. Brown Collection)

Track and Field

In the period under study the term athletics was used in place of track and field, however the events were principally the same.

Athletics was basically of two types, the foot race and the full program of track and field events. One man against another over a set distance was not new to the west nor to the Indian. The fur traders and early missionaries both witnessed and participated in foot races. The Rev. John McDougall was proud of his speed and found it useful in his work. After winning a race against several Indians in 1863, he commented, "That race opened many a lodge and the heart of many a friend in subsequent years".¹³⁵

The early settlers, complete with the betting urge, never passed up a chance for a little excitement. As a result, several people found it worthwhile to use their speed for material gain. John Watson, known as "North West", issued an open challenge to anyone at any distance up to a half-mile.¹³⁶ He was successful at defeating all comers from 1881 to 1883, with his biggest race run in Edmonton in 1881, being worth twenty-five dollars. More successful in this aspect was the Indian runner, Moosewa; so successful, in fact, that several people managed his financial affairs. The Indian from Lac St. Anne ran against all comers at any distance (Fig. 10). One of his first big races was in 1891, when he defeated Torrance of Calgary at one hundred yards, at one hundred dollars a side.¹³⁷ In 1894 and 1895 John Allan of Toronto toured the west and ran against Moosewa on several

¹³⁵ John McDougall, Saddle, Sled and Snowshoe, Toronto: William Briggs, 1898, pp. 52-53.

¹³⁶ Edmonton Bulletin, February 7, 1881.

¹³⁷ Ibid., August 15, 1891.

occasions, defeating him once in a race run for two hundred dollars a side.¹³⁸ By 1896 Moosewa was starting to travel in search of competition and that fall he was running in Vancouver. He was still running 1905, when he defeated C.H. Stout of Conjuring Creek during the sports day held to celebrate the creation of the Province of Alberta.¹³⁹

The athletic events were popular among the early settlers, and comprised most of the program of the early sport days. The North West Mounted Police and the Hudson's Bay Company posts were the scenes of the early athletic meets. In essence, all that was needed was an open area and some competition. McDougall, on a trip to Fort Gary, met a part of French half-breeds:

At one of our evening encampments one party challenged the other to a contest in athletic sports, and we beat them badly, my man Baptiste leaving their best man easily in a footrace. . . . Then in the jumping and throwing of the stone we were far ahead and my men were greatly pleased at our victory.¹⁴⁰

As settlement increased the number of athletic events increased and often the organizing committee arranged for cash prizes. The program of athletic events on May 24, 1884, in Calgary, included the one hundred yard run, one mile run, one hundred yard hurdles, standing long jump, standing high jump, running high jump, running triple jump, throwing the hammer and throwing the cricket ball.¹⁴¹ The events in this meet and most others included various running events for both boys and girls, and on some programs these were refined into age group events. Often some of the events on the program gave an indication as to what sports were popular at various times.

¹³⁸ Ibid., August 13, 1894.

¹³⁹ Statement by C.H. Stout, personal interview, December 1, 1968.

¹⁴⁰ McDougall, op. cit., pp. 136-137.

¹⁴¹ Calgary Herald, May 28, 1884.

Such events as kicking the football or soccerball, and throwing the cricket-ball or baseball were performed when the sport was popular in the area. Other events, such as the three-legged race, climbing the greasy pole, and pack race often appeared on the program and usually proved very popular.

The performances of the competitors varied, but on the average the winning times and distances were well below world standards of that time. However, on several occasions, the performances were outstanding. In 1894 Allan defeated Moosewa in the quarter mile in a time of 51.8 seconds, while in 1895 Moosewa defeated Allan in a two hundred and twenty yard run in a time of 22.7 seconds.^{142, 143} These times may be expected from such men, but a gentleman by the name of Galligher from Lethbridge, who did not run for a living, is recorded as having run the one hundred yard dash in 10.7 seconds.¹⁴⁴

By the late 1890's, the sports day was an annual event in almost every community, and even though other sports were included on the program, athletics remained one of the most popular.

¹⁴² Edmonton Bulletin, August 13, 1894.

¹⁴³ Ibid., May 27, 1895.

¹⁴⁴ Lethbridge News, October 29, 1890.



Figure 10. Indian Runner, Moosewa, Edmonton, 1892.
(E. Brown Collection)

Sports Day

Holidays were a rare occurrence in the early west, for there was always something to do; but when a holiday did occur, everyone took advantage of the opportunity. The sports day was a social gathering as well as a chance to engage in some friendly competition. The whole family would pack up for the day and travel to the fair grounds where there was some activity for every member of the family. The days for the celebrations were usually May twenty-fourth and July first.

The sports day program could include almost any event, but usually consisted of athletic events and other sports that were popular at the time. The first organized sports day held in Edmonton, in 1882, included athletic events and horse racing.¹⁴⁵ This was basically the pattern upon which the sports days were operated. The athletic events were the core activity and the other sports were fitted around them.

In order to organize and run one or two days of various sporting events required some planning, and as a result various groups were created. The Fort Saskatchewan Amateur Athletic Association and the Edmonton and District Races and Sports Association were two such groups.^{146, 147} The Edmonton association, typical of most, had sports committees to plan and run the various events as well as arrange for entry fees and prizes. For May twenty-fourth, 1895, six sports committees planned two days of activity with the prize total reaching two thousand dollars. Twenty-five hundred to

¹⁴⁵ Edmonton Bulletin, June 10, 1882.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., June 10, 1882.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., May 30, 1885.

three thousand people turned out to watch and participate in athletic events, rugby football, rifle matches, horse races, trap shooting and bicycle races.¹⁴⁸

Often the program content was dependent upon the organization planning the sports day. The Calgary fire brigade took an active role in sports and, in sponsoring the July first sports in 1898, they included, in addition to the usual athletic events, a ladder climbing contest, a horse coupling race and a hose reel race.¹⁴⁹ In Fort Macleod, the North West Mounted Police organized several sports days in which events closely related to their work were included: tent pegging, the steeplechase, and figure of eight horse race were several of the events that appeared on the program.¹⁵⁰

The sports day was not confined to just the two big holidays. Various groups such as the Orangemen, the Canadian Pacific Railway employees, and church groups held picnics and gatherings at which athletic events and various sports such as baseball and soccer were part of the program.

As the number of communities increased in the 1890's, two trends developed. Some towns held their own local sports days even though surrounding communities were doing the same; the result was a sports day, considerably local in nature. Other communities decided to celebrate only one of the two holidays and take advantage of another community's sports day. Fort Macleod celebrated the twenty-fourth of May while Pincher Creek held its big sports day on July first. Edmonton and South Edmonton also concentrated their efforts and held one big event each. The railways encouraged travel and took advantage of the sports days by offering excursion rates to the larger

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., May 30, 1885.

¹⁴⁹ Calgary Herald, June 2, 1898.

¹⁵⁰ Macleod Gazette, July 9, 1891.

centers in order to coincide with the holidays; the result was that both the railway and the sports days benefitted.

Communities, both large and small, held their sports days. The following held at least one during 1899: Lesser Slave Lake, Strathcona, Lacombe, Leduc, Fort Saskatchewan, Calgary, Banff, Ponoka, Medicine Hat, Cardston, Fort Macleod and Pincher Creek.



Figure 11. Baseball game as part of the sports day,
Lethbridge, July 1, 1897. (Higinbotham,
When the West Was Young)

CHAPTER IV

WINTER-ORIENTATED SPORTS AND GAMES

Curling

The Scottish immigrants brought their favorite winter pastime with them when they journeyed to North America, and as settlement in Canada moved west, the game of curling came as well. Judging from the names of some of the early curlers, McQueen, Walker and McDonald, the Scottish influence was primarily responsible for introducing the game to Alberta.

An editorial comment in the Calgary Herald in 1883 suggested that, ". . . the enthusiasts of the roaring game should form a club".¹⁵¹ This indicates that the game was being played in the Calgary district at this time. In 1885 a curling club was formed and the membership fee, ten dollars, was the highest of any sport at this time in the area under study. The newly formed club had some difficulty in securing ice and no games were reported as having been played until the club was reorganized in the fall of 1888.¹⁵² At this time there were sixty members and plans were made to form a joint stock company, sell shares at ten dollars each, and build an enclosed curling rink. The new building was not opened until the fall of 1890, and, in the meantime, the club used the Star skating rink, affiliated with the Manitoba branch of the Royal Caledonian Curling Club, and competed in the Winnipeg bonspiel.^{153, 154} The winner of the bonspiel was to have gone east to Ottawa in 1889 to compete for one of two silver cups that had been presented for

¹⁵¹ Calgary Herald, November 30, 1883.

¹⁵² Ibid., September 26, 1888.

¹⁵³ Ibid., January 9, 1889.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., March 6, 1889.

the Ottawa bonspiel by Lord Stanley.¹⁵⁵ The results were not recorded.

Further north, in Edmonton, curling was a little later in getting started, but the longer periods of freezing temperatures provided ample opportunity for an outdoor rink to be constructed and several weeks of curling to be enjoyed. The Edmonton Bulletin mentioned that some odd looking objects were being thrown on the river ice in the winter of 1887-88 and then a report of the ". . . first curling match in the Northern Alberta District", appeared in the paper.¹⁵⁶ The game had been played to celebrate St. Andrew's day and a sheet of ice had been constructed in the Hudson's Bay Fort. Following the game a club was formed and, by January of 1890, seven rinks were using the Hudson's Bay Company rink as well as the river ice. During the first year the club affiliated with the Manitoba branch of the Royal Caledonian Curling Club and one rink journeyed to Winnipeg to the bonspiel via the Canadian Pacific Railway from Calgary, for the special return rate of twenty-five dollars.¹⁵⁷ The Royal Caledonian Curling Club was the national body for curling in Scotland and the members of the various clubs felt it was an honour to be affiliated with the parent body back in the homeland. Tradition was very strong at the time.

In the spring of 1889 the president of the Edmonton club formed a joint stock company, sold shares and started on the construction of an indoor rink. The club's set of iron curling stones was sold to the Fort Saskatchewan club for one hundred dollars and the rink company ordered two sets of granite

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., January 23, 1889.

¹⁵⁶ Edmonton Bulletin, December 1, 1888.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., February 17, 1889.

rocks from the east.¹⁵⁸ The first indoor curling rink in Alberta was opened in November of 1889. The building was 153 by 38 feet and included two sheets of ice, a club room, an enclosed well and pump, and twenty-two large windows for added lighting.¹⁵⁹ The club rented the rink for one hundred dollars a season and the stones for thirty dollars a season. Membership grew rapidly and a regular curling season became a perennial occurrence in Edmonton.

The Calgary rink, constructed by the Alberta Rink Company, was completed in the fall of 1890. It included two sheets of ice and electric light, but the yearly rental was four hundred dollars a year.¹⁶⁰ As in Edmonton, regular curling in Calgary had started in earnest.

The southern part of the province, because of the chinooks, was a little slower in taking up the game. With one being able to play golf or tennis in mid-January with some degree of regularity, the curlers naturally had trouble not only creating ice, but interest as well. In Medicine Hat there were curlers on the river in 1889, but it was not until 1896 that a club was formed and a Mr. Colter built an enclosed rink, half for curlers and half for skaters.¹⁶¹ Lethbridge opened an indoor rink, complete with electric light, in 1895, while Fort Macleod opened its new rink in 1898.^{162, 163}

Competition took two basic forms within the curling clubs. Each club had its regular draw which saw most rinks curling once or twice a week.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., August 17, 1889.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., November 9, 1889.

¹⁶⁰ Calgary Herald, October 1, 1890.

¹⁶¹ Medicine Hat Times, November 26, 1896.

¹⁶² Lethbridge News, January 9, 1895.

¹⁶³ Macleod Gazette, December 16, 1898.

The regular draw would last almost the entire season with some form of a prize or trophy going to the rink with the best record (Fig. 12). Perhaps the trophy most regularly competed for was the Hardisty Cup. This cup was donated by Mrs. Hardisty, wife of a chief factor of the Edmonton Hudson's Bay post.¹⁶⁴ It was presented for annual competition in 1889 and was awarded annually to the rink with the best season's score. The bonspiel, or curliana as it was then called, was the lifeblood of curling. The social aspect was almost as important as the game itself, with the host club treating the visiting rinks to banquets, toasts and an evening of social entertainment. Edmonton and Calgary, starting in 1892, each sent several rinks to the other's bonspiel; this was one of the few sports in which the two centers competed with any degree of regularity.¹⁶⁵

From the results of the bonspiels it is evident that new clubs were coming into existence. The Edmonton bonspiel of 1898 included two rinks from Calgary, one from Innisfail and six from Edmonton, while the Calgary bonspiel of 1899, with eight events, had rinks from Edmonton, Fort Macleod, Fish Creek, Lethbridge, Innisfail and Golden, British Columbia.^{166, 167} Both regular league play and the bonspiels included the ladies, as early as 1893 in Edmonton (Fig. 13). The boys also took to the game. In Edmonton the juveniles were curling on the river with make-shift rocks and in 1890 held a small bonspiel of their own.¹⁶⁸ In Calgary the teenagers defeated the

¹⁶⁴ Edmonton Bulletin, February 18, 1889.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., February 13, 1892.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., February 24, 1898.

¹⁶⁷ Calgary Herald, January 26, 1899.

¹⁶⁸ Edmonton Bulletin, March 15, 1890.



Figure 12. Curling Champions, Edmonton, 1900.
(E. Brown Collection)



Figure 13. Ladies curling, Edmonton, 1900.
(E. Brown Collection)

Walker rink, the best in Calgary that year, by a score of eleven to ten.¹⁶⁹

Skating

When one considers the geography and climate, it only seems natural that skating should have become popular. The communities and police posts were situated close to rivers and the climate provided freezing temperatures for several months each year. Furthermore, a good majority of the settlers moving into the communities, such as Edmonton and Calgary, had come from eastern Canada, where skating was already a favorite pastime.

The winter of 1883-1884 saw skating in both Edmonton and Calgary. "A few police enjoying a skate on the pond near the barracks", was the report appearing in the Calgary Herald.¹⁷⁰ Following this Barvis and Brodrick cleared a rink on the Elbow river and built a house for skate changing; the first commercial skating rink was then in operation.¹⁷¹ In Edmonton, the Bulletin reported that people were skating on the river.¹⁷² Two areas had been cleared but there was no mention of admission charges. These were the first reports of skating that appeared in the newspapers. It is possible, because of its unspectacular nature and being simply a pastime, that skating could have occurred at an earlier date and not been reported in the newspapers. Skating became a general winter pastime by the 1900's, with people buying season's tickets to use indoor rinks, paying admission to attend skating carnivals, and clearing snow off the local pond for a Sunday afternoon skate.

¹⁶⁹ Calgary Herald, February 9, 1899.

¹⁷⁰ Calgary Herald, November 9, 1883.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., November 30, 1883.

¹⁷² Edmonton Bulletin, January 6, 1883.

With skating growing in popularity, merchants began stocking skates in their stores while other business men invested in skating rinks. The first advertisement for sports equipment in the Edmonton Bulletin appeared in the fall of 1892, advertising skates for sale.¹⁷³ A similar advertisement appeared in the Fort Macleod newspaper that same year. The first rinks made use of the natural ice that was already available, in most cases the rivers. However, as the townsites grew, both indoor and outdoor rinks were constructed in what would now be considered the city center. In Medicine Hat a Mr. Winnett, in December of 1885, built a rink, with a double season's ticket costing seven dollars and a single five dollars.¹⁷⁴ Business was good, for in the same month a Mr. McCulchson opened a second rink and, to attract patrons, offered transportation to and from the rink.¹⁷⁵ The Edmonton Thistle rink, an outdoor structure, had been built next to the covered curling rink and, in 1892-1893, the owners of the curling rink opened the ice to skaters, with several hockey games also being played indoors.¹⁷⁶

The owners of the rinks soon realized that something besides open skating was necessary to maintain good patronage at the rinks, and carnivals, races and fancy figures appeared in the rink schedules. The carnivals, usually fancy dress, must have been popular, as most rinks held several a year. The covered rink in Lethbridge was the scene of four carnivals in 1893, while the Colter rink in Medicine Hat held three in 1897.^{177, 178} The music for

¹⁷³ Ibid., November 28, 1892.

¹⁷⁴ Medicine Hat Times, December 3, 1885.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., December 10, 1885.

¹⁷⁶ Edmonton Bulletin, December 12, 1892.

¹⁷⁷ Lethbridge News, March 8, 1893.

¹⁷⁸ Medicine Hat News, March 4, 1897.

the carnivals was the local band. The Calgary fire brigade band was kept very busy in 1893 with each of the two rinks in town holding several carnivals during the winter. The carnival provided some physical exercise but was popular for its social aspects. The women welcomed the chance to exhibit their latest fashions and the men, their skating ability. The skating races were confined to the men and the children. The events usually ranged from one-half mile to five mile races and betting did occur in a few cases.¹⁷⁹ Figure competition for men was part of the program in the Lethbridge carnival of 1895 and, in Calgary, J.R. McCulloch of Winnipeg put on an exhibition of speed skating and fancy figures during a carnival in 1898.^{180, 181}

The smaller communities did not have the population to warrant someone investing in the construction of a rink so the lakes, ponds and rivers were cleared of snow and used as long as weather permitted.

Hockey

Within ten years, after skating was first introduced, hockey was being played in Alberta. Skating on the rivers in Edmonton and Calgary first occurred in 1883, and by 1885 skating carnivals, complete with music, were being held.^{182, 183} The first games of hockey, by newspaper accounts, were played in Calgary at the Star Skating rink during the winter of 1892-1893. The first game involved the town boys and the tailors, the latter losing four to one.¹⁸⁴

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., December 26, 1895.

¹⁸⁰ Lethbridge News, January 23, 1895.

¹⁸¹ Calgary Herald, April 7, 1898.

¹⁸² Ibid., November 9, 1883.

¹⁸³ Edmonton Bulletin, January 6, 1883.

¹⁸⁴ Calgary Herald, January 4, 1893.

Once a few games had been played, the popularity of hockey increased rapidly. By the spring of 1893 Calgary had two organized teams as well as many additional hockey players who engaged in the game whenever the opportunity arose.¹⁸⁵ In Edmonton two teams were formed in the fall of 1894. The Thistles represented the north side of the river and the Shamrocks the south side.¹⁸⁶ A series of games was played on the river during the winter, including four games between the Thistles and the police from Fort Saskatchewan. The first hockey tournament was held in Edmonton in March of 1895 when Calgary and the police team from Fort Saskatchewan played the Thistles.¹⁸⁷ Calgary won that tournament and an indication of their playing ability was evident when they defeated a combined Edmonton and Fort Saskatchewan team.

The next few seasons saw the number of teams expand rapidly. New teams appeared in Red Deer, Medicine Hat, Pincher Creek, Fort Macleod, Millarville, Canmore and Banff. Most of the new clubs soon had junior teams which provided the senior teams with opponents for practice and also gave the schools some added competition. Both Edmonton and Calgary had two school teams each and the Industrial School at High River fielded a strong team in the late 1890's (Fig. 14).

As the number of hockey teams increased, so did the number of hockey tournaments, and eventually a school hockey league was formed. In Edmonton the two senior teams played a series of games each year, and in 1897 the Thistles defeated the Shamrocks in the final game and were declared city champions¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., February 1, 1893.

¹⁸⁶ Edmonton Bulletin, November 29, 1894.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., March 4, 1895.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., March 25, 1897.

(Fig. 15). The Hourston Challenge Cup, for clubs north of Red Deer, was presented for competition in 1898. Only the two senior Edmonton teams competed the first year, with the trophy going to the Thistles.¹⁸⁹ (Fig. 16). To the south the Calgary and Medicine Hat teams relied on tournaments to provide most of their games. The Calgary team won the Edmonton tournaments in 1895 and 1896. In 1896 Medicine Hat, having defeated Regina in the Moose Jaw tournament, invited Calgary to play for the North West Territory championship.¹⁹⁰

Medicine Hat defeated Calgary and was presented with a silver pitcher inscribed:

Presented by L.H. Doll
HOCKEY
Calgary vs Medicine Hat
Friday March 13, 1896
For this cup and championship of the N.W.T.¹⁹¹

The following year Regina and Calgary played in Medicine Hat and again the championship trophy went to Medicine Hat.¹⁹² No tournaments involving clubs from different communities were played the following two seasons.

The only hockey league to be formed before the twentieth century was in Edmonton. In March of 1898 a silver trophy inscribed, "School Hockey Trophy for Edmonton District" was presented to the Edmonton Public School team, which had defeated their counterparts on the south side.¹⁹³ In

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., February 20, 1898.

¹⁹⁰ Medicine Hat Times, March 12, 1896.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., March 19, 1896.

¹⁹² Ibid., February 25, 1897.

¹⁹³ Edmonton Bulletin, March 7, 1898.

November of that year the Edmonton district school hockey league was established and regular games started to be played (Fig. 17). The High River school team was very enthusiastic and, in search of competition, played the senior teams in Calgary and Edmonton.¹⁹⁴ This was the only school that sent its teams outside its own district to compete in sports.

The popularity of the game had grown to such an extent that in the late 1890's the ladies started to play. In Medicine Hat the ladies were playing, with no spectators allowed, and the South Side Ladies Hockey Team in Edmonton was on the ice in 1899¹⁹⁵ (Fig. 18).

The rules under which the game was played were relatively uniform, due in part to the fact that most clubs played under the rules of the Manitoba and North West Territories Hockey Association. The only rule that apparently varied was the length of the game. The two most commonly occurring patterns were the two, thirty minute halves, or the four, fifteen minute quarters; however, during the late 1890's, the three twenty minute periods started to be used in a few games.^{196, 197, 198} A team consisted of "four forwards, a cover point, point, and goal", with the goal keeper wearing cricket pads, if they were available¹⁹⁹ (Fig. 15). From the pictures it would appear that the goal keeper was the only player who wore any protective equipment. No

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., February 27, 1899.

¹⁹⁵ Medicine Hat Times, March 11, 1897.

¹⁹⁶ Edmonton Bulletin, December 24, 1894.

¹⁹⁷ Calgary Herald, February 18, 1897.

¹⁹⁸ Edmonton Bulletin, January 23, 1896.

¹⁹⁹ Macleod Gazette, February 10, 1899.

goal stick is evident and all the skates appear to have the same type of blade (Figs. 15, 16, 17).



Figure 14. Boys Hockey Team, High River Industrial School, 1899. (E. Brown Collection)



Figure 15. Edmonton Thistles Hockey Team, 1897. (E. Brown Collection)



Figure 16. Edmonton Thistles Hockey Team, 1898.
(E. Brown Collection)



Figure 17. Edmonton Public Schoolboys Hockey Team, 1899.
(E. Brown Collection)



Figure 18. Edmonton South Side Ladies Hockey Team, 1899.
(E. Brown Collection)

Snowshoeing

Both the Indians and the fur traders made extensive use of the snowshoe, and, before the dog team, it was the principal method of travel in the winter months (Fig. 19). As the horse, wagon and railway opened up the area, the snowshoe and the fur trapper moved north and west into unsettled areas. There is very little information as to what extent the snowshoe was used by the new settlers. Only two items appeared in the newspapers. The Calgary Herald reported that a snowshoeing club had been formed in Banff in 1888 and the Medicine Hat News mentioned, "a party out for a length tramp".^{200, 201} Snowshoeing, like skating, may have been more widespread, but because of a lack of competition and organized clubs, it was not considered newsworthy and did not appear in the newspapers.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., February 22, 1888.

²⁰¹ Medicine Hat News, February 7, 1895.



Figure 19. The Pioneer, Edmonton, 1889.
(E. Brown Collection)

CHAPTER V

INDOOR-ORIENTATED SPORTS AND GAMES

Boxing

The "Manly art" of boxing received mixed reactions from the various communities in Alberta. The Calgary Herald reported club matches in the spring of 1887 and, by July, Fitzgerald was the local champion.²⁰² The club remained active and, by 1897, the fire brigade champion had challenged the club champion to a five round match.²⁰³ The Calgary Herald, unlike its northern counterpart the Edmonton Bulletin, saw nothing wrong with boxing and carried a special article entitled, "The Knock Out Blow - The Why and Wherefore Explained by an Expert".²⁰⁴

Boxing in Edmonton was less successful. Periodic reports of "slugging matches" appeared in the Bulletin between 1882 and 1892. In 1892 an attempt was made to form a club for gymnastics, boxing and fencing. This, apparently, was not successful, and in 1893 an Athletic Association for "exercising and boxing" was formed.^{205, 206} The association held matches for two years, featuring local fighters, and on one occasion held an exhibition bout between two professionals from outside the district.²⁰⁷ The local bouts were not well received by the local press.

A glove contest between two toughs named respectively, Cuff and White took place in Rovertson Hall on Monday night. The hall was crowded. The glove contest became a fight from the start and Cuff

²⁰² Calgary Herald, July 15, 1887.

²⁰³ Ibid., April 29, 1897.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., November 26, 1890.

²⁰⁵ Edmonton Bulletin, May 19, 1892.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., November 13, 1893.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., August 13, 1894.

had one wrist broken. At the fourth round White failed to come to time. The police ordered the fight to stop and there was much disputing about the payment of bets. Such exhibitions are new in Edmonton and are a disgrace which should not be tolerated. Men who attempt to make their living by giving exhibitions of this kind are no use to town or country. There is no room here for the display of their peculiar talents and they should be gently but firmly instructed by the proper authorities to move on.²⁰⁸

No further mention of boxing in Edmonton appeared in the Bulletin.

Professional boxers travelled across Canada and the United States giving exhibition bouts wherever the promoters could create enough interest. Lethbridge and Fort Macleod, although they did not have boxing clubs, enjoyed the sport from the spectator's point of view. An exhibition match in Lethbridge in 1886 saw Hawkins of Winnipeg defeat Austin of Calgary in the seventh round.²⁰⁹ The purse was two hundred and fifty dollars, which indicates that the promoters must have had a good number of paying spectators. Fort Macleod held a bout in 1892, billed as the championship for southern Alberta, in which M. Johnson of England defeated A. Dixon of Ontario on a seventh round technical knockout.²¹⁰

Boxing in the area, except for Calgary, was mainly a spectator sport, with most of the people happy enough to watch and wager. Calgary was the only center where a club was active for any period of time. From a spectator's point of view, "Fighting Tom" was worth watching. The boxing kangaroo passed through southern Alberta while on a world tour.²¹¹ He would spar four rounds with all comers. No report as to the number of challengers

²⁰⁸ Ibid., December 20, 1894.

²⁰⁹ Lethbridge News, July 9, 1886.

²¹⁰ Macleod Gazette, July 28, 1892.

²¹¹ Ibid., August 12, 1898.

appeared in the press.

Wrestling

In the issue of the Macleod Gazette, dated March 24, 1883, a report appeared stating that a wrestling match was to take place between D. Fraser and J. Human.²¹² This is the only written evidence of a wrestling match in the Alberta area prior to 1900. The activity of wrestling is native to man, and the Indian and European youngsters certainly engaged in the activity, but organized matches among the adult population apparently did not occur with any degree of frequency.

Fencing

The use of the sword or foil was an activity uncommon to the west. The fur traders and the North West Mounted Police relied on the rifle and the pistol for protective measures, and, when leisure time permitted, these were the weapons used for sporting purposes, such as target shooting.

In Edmonton, attempts were made to form a club so that the sports of gymnastics, boxing and fencing could be pursued.²¹³ This was 1892, and, with no further mention in the newspaper, it is assumed that interest was not sufficient for a club to be formed. However, a short note in the Bulletin in November of 1894 reported that a fencing exhibition by M. DeRoux and Count Nigrami had taken place; an indication that there was some interest if only at the spectator level.²¹⁴

From the information available it is evident that the art of fencing was relatively non-existent in Alberta before 1900.

²¹² Ibid., March 24, 1883.

²¹³ Edmonton Bulletin, May 19, 1892.

²¹⁴ Ibid., November 22, 1894.

Gymnastics

Gymnastics, somewhat like fencing, was an activity that was not readily accepted by the inhabitants of the various communities. In Edmonton, Calgary and Lethbridge people tried to open gymnasia and organize clubs but only the latter two cities met with any success in this regard. In Edmonton two attempts to organize a club for gymnastics failed, and no further mention was made in the Bulletin.^{215, 216} In 1885 a gymnasium was opened in Calgary and is reported to have been equipped with gymnastics and weight lifting equipment.²¹⁷ The gymnasium was still in operation in May of 1887, when a sports night was held. The program consisted of a gymnastics display, a boxing match and a roller skating race.²¹⁸ The boxing match was the most popular attraction, and by 1889 it was the only activity being conducted in the gymnasium. Several attempts to reorganize the gymnastics club was made in the 1890's but these were not successful. The Lethbridge Amateur Athletic Club was formed in 1891 so that its members could participate in gymnastics. Twenty-five members, each paying a five dollar membership fee, joined the club. A building was rented and some gymnastic equipment ordered.²¹⁹ This was the report in the Lethbridge News; no further activities of the club are known.

It is not surprising that gymnastics was not a popular activity before

²¹⁵ Ibid., May 19, 1892.

²¹⁶ Ibid., December 2, 1892.

²¹⁷ Calgary Herald, February 19, 1885.

²¹⁸ Ibid., May 6, 1887.

²¹⁹ Lethbridge News, January 23, 1891.

1900, for even to-day the number of people in Alberta who are actively participating in gymnastics is relatively small.

Roller Skating

With ice skating being a popular activity during the winter months, several ambitious gentlemen hoped that roller skating would also be met favourably by the public. In March of 1885, a Mr. G. Fraser of Calgary was busy constructing an indoor roller skating rink compete with a maple floor.²²⁰ This was the first covered rink of any type to be constructed in Alberta. The activity was apparently popular, and a shipment of two pairs of skates reached Calgary by rail in September of 1885, and, by October, the rink was open daily.²²¹ The program of activities at the rink soon included races, ranging from one to ten miles in distance, and on one occasion a game of soccer was played on roller skates.²²²

In Lethbridge, F. Brown was reported to have remodeled the Lethbridge Hall for roller skating and installed seats for spectators.²²³ This was 1886, and by 1888 the activity seems to have lost its popularity both in Calgary and Lethbridge, as no reports appeared in the newspapers concerning roller skating, after 1888.

Bowling

Ten pin bowling reached the Alberta area in 1884.²²⁴ The Edmonton Hotel opened its bowling alley in the summer of 1884 and it received a good deal

²²⁰ Calgary Herald, March 19, 1885.

²²¹ Ibid., September 30, 1885.

²²² Ibid., November 25, 1885.

²²³ Lethbridge News, December 1, 1886.

²²⁴ Edmonton Bulletin, August 9, 1884.

of use for the first several months, then the popularity of the game decreased. From the limited newspaper reports it is hard to determine if the alley remained open after 1885 or not. The next mention in the newspaper was not until 1899, when the Bulletin reported that the alley was being renovated.²²⁵ At about the same time the Assiniboia Hotel in Medicine Hat had opened an alley, and in January of 1899 a bowling club was formed.²²⁶ By the turn of the century, interest in bowling was increasing in Alberta.

²²⁵ Ibid., October 5, 1899.

²²⁶ Medicine Hat News, January 12, 1899.

CHAPTER VI

ASSOCIATIONS

Athletic Associations

With the number of sports and clubs increasing, the limited number of playing fields, and the small populations from which to draw players, the need arose for an organization to coordinate and promote sport. For example, in Edmonton, in 1892, the cricket, lacrosse and baseball teams were all active, and there was a need to cooperate in arranging for the use of the sports grounds, for practices and games.²²⁷

Two types of athletic associations developed before 1900. The first type arose from the need to plan and operate the sports day. The Fort Saskatchewan Amateur Athletic Association was such an association which conducted various tournaments and games, thus ensuring that the events ran smoothly, and, for example, that the baseball game and the horse races were not underway at the same time. The other type of athletic association was a union of the various teams, "for the better management of local sports".²²⁸ This basically was the purpose of the second type of association. The procedures varied somewhat from association to association. For example, the athletic association in Medicine Hat had a budget, and the bicycle club received financial assistance in constructing a race track.²²⁹

In Sheep Creek the athletic association, consisting of the cricket, soccer, and hockey teams, did not have a budget. The association in this

²²⁷ Ibid., September 22, 1892

²²⁸ Ibid., March 30, 1896.

²²⁹ Medicine Hat Times, May 17, 1894.

case was a cooperative organization which arranged for games and billets for visiting teams.²³⁰

The need for local cooperation was recognized, and met with some degree of success. On the district level, the arrangement of games between teams was still on the basis of individual initiative. If a team wanted to play then it had to make its own arrangements.

Young Men's Christian Association

Mr. Corbett, the travelling secretary for the Young Men's Christian Association, visited Calgary in 1890 and a local branch, under president W.H. Cushing, was formed that year.²³¹ The Calgary branch gathered a supply of books, rented two rooms and established a reading room and, ". . . a gathering place for young men".²³² The branch did not sponsor any sporting activities, but the association was established and accepted by the community before 1900.

²³⁰ Calgary Herald, May 6, 1897.

²³¹ Ibid., August 20, 1890.

²³² Ibid., September 10, 1890.

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY

Early sport in Alberta was often narrowly based, limited mainly to the urban population, effected by ethnic origin of the immigrants, and often a money-making operation. In the years when communities were being established and growing rapidly, sport was sometimes effected in adverse ways. Very often an activity revolved around one or two individuals. If these people happened to move, participation in the activity often declined. In Medicine Hat baseball was very popular in the late 1880's with men's, juvenile and school teams in existence. Then, during the winter of 1890-1891, several key players on the men's team moved, and the following spring, the men's baseball club was nonexistent.

Unless one lived in or near a community, the opportunity to take part in many of the sports did not exist. The team sports, like soccer, rugby and baseball, required not only numbers, but practice time as well. In order to practice, the team members had to live in close proximity with each other, and the person working in town normally had set hours, usually with the evenings free. This was not always the case with farmers, especially if they had livestock. The rural settler usually had to limit his sporting activities to the sports days.

With no sporting activities originating in Alberta, the ones that were brought by the settlers were influenced by their ethnic background. The immigrants of British ancestry were responsible for bringing cricket, rugby, soccer, curling and polo to the province. These were activities that were part of their culture and they were retained in their new setting. The settlers from the United States also brought part of their culture, baseball, and the immigrants from eastern Canada introduced hockey to the west.

Generally, the participant in sport was an amateur; he participated for the enjoyment and not the material gain. In fact, on some occasions, it cost the player a substantial amount to compete. When clubs travelled, it usually meant that each player had to pay his own way. There were, however, individuals who competed for the financial rewards. The matched race, whether on foot, skates, or horseback had a prize. Most individuals who competed for a prize invariably had regular jobs and used the races to supplement their income, while others became true professionals, and used sport as their sole means of support. The Indian, Moosewa, was a professional runner, but generally the professional was a rarity prior to 1900. There were also individuals who made money from sport but did not compete themselves. The promoter was part of the scene at the race track, the boxing match and the sports day.

With all of the sports and games that were played, one must keep in mind that the number of games per sport was limited. It would have been a very active season for a team to play ten games in a year. There were no leagues that involved teams from the different towns except for the North West Rifle League, and the championships that were declared were often not representative of the area. Calgary was invited to play in Medicine Hat for a hockey championship of the North West Territories in 1897. In this case only Regina, Calgary and Medicine Hat competed, with none of the teams really having won the right to represent its area.

The growth of sport in Alberta was closely linked with the development of communication and transportation. The settlement of the west followed the railway and, as the population increased, new farms and towns arose. The newspapers made it possible for the inhabitants to keep up to date with what was happening elsewhere. The members of a team could read about the

existence of another team, then, using the telegraph or the mail service, could arrange for a game. The travel arrangements were made possible by the existence of the railway. The Canadian Pacific Railway may not have had the development of sport in mind when it arranged excursion rates for teams and sports days, but the bringing of rail travel within reach of the limited team budgets made possible a lot of interurban competition.

The newspapers had their effect upon sport in other ways. In several cases the editors actively supported certain sports. Editorials encouraging the formation of clubs and offering the newspaper office as a meeting place, enabled several sports to operate on an organized basis. The coverage given in the newspapers had a bearing on the popularity of the various sports. In Edmonton, boxing was disliked by the Bulletin and was not a popular activity in the area, whereas in Fort Macleod, the Gazette gave wide coverage to horse races and helped maintain interest in that sport.

The North West Mounted Police had a significant influence on sport in the province. Unlike towns, which took time to grow, the police post, almost overnight, had a group of men living and working together. With little to occupy themselves in their spare time, they took up past activities, sport being one. Some members of the force had come either directly from Great Britain or were of British descent. These men enjoyed cricket, athletics, soccer and rugby and, in many parts of the province, the police teams were among the first to be organized. The existence of a police team encouraged the nearby civilian population to also form a team, as competition against another team was possible. The possibility of two teams in the same area allowed some team sports to develop before interurban transportation was practical. Fort Macleod is a prime example, with two cricket teams in existence almost ten years before the arrival of the railway.

The full history of the sports, games and pastimes in the area now known as the province of Alberta, until 1900, is beyond recovery. The primary sources of material are the five major newspapers, that were being published during the time period, which unfortunately do not give one a complete picture. However, the available evidence indicates that sports played a prominent part in the lives of the early Albertans, and the province to-day can claim a rich sports heritage.

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